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ABSTRACT

This book analyzes vocational education and training (VET) systems in seven advanced industrial countries (AICs) to determine institutional arrangements for skills creation most promising in attaining the learning society. The AICs are France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States, and Sweden. Chapter 1 discusses special problems of VET that become an example of something far more general among contemporary AICs: the problems confronted increasingly require collective solutions, but the core biases of political and economic action increasingly reject collective action. Each AIC is then located within the concept of a skill equilibrium and within a labor market concept. Chapter 2 examines VET and labor market participation trends. Chapter 3 considers changing patterns of participation in international trade. Chapter 4 explores the practical potential for government action in skill creation in the two most effective exemplars of detailed direct state-led systems--France and Sweden--and in Italy and the United Kingdom, which have weak past records. Chapter 5 focuses on German corporatist intermediary organizations that move between individual firms and the public policy arena, providing a collective goods component while remaining within the business community. Chapter 6 considers the role of informal networks for skill creation in Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Chapter 7 discusses reliance on capabilities of the firm, with some encouragement from government, as the best approach to construction of a knowledge society. Chapter 8 draws conclusions and policy implications. The book contains 372 references and an index. (YLB)

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